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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Wednesday - April 23, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT COTTON!" Information from the Farm Security Administration. U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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"His Majesty, King Cotton" has many devoted subjects in the land. Can you imagine what you would do without your cool summer prints, your gay-colored aprons, your soft dainty curtains, your easy-to-launder linens, your thirsty bath towels - to say nothing of the boys' overalls, girls' dresses, baby's sunsuits, and everybody's gloves, socks, and hankies? I'd hate to do without my cotton things even a day!

Cotton is a real necessity these days - not only in our homes but in the industrial world - for road building, construction work, manufacturing, army and navy equipment, and many other purposes. You and I use it because it is attractive, serviceable, and inexpensive. We like it because we can use it in so many different ways - it's versatile. We can buy it sheer or heavy, aristocratic or practical. We can get it unbleached for sheets, mattress covers, or workshirts, or can get it mercerized, crease-resistant, and "air-conditioned" for graduation dresses, evening gowns, street frocks, and wedding dresses.

Cotton is smart and becoming to wear, easily laundered and doesn't pile up dry cleaning bills, is strong and durable, is cheap and plentiful to buy. Every person in the United States - from the crossroads to the skyscraper - uses cotton in one form or another, and will probably use it more and more as time goes on and new uses are found for it. Some of the folks who are going to use it more, no doubt, are the very folks who grow it.

It's been a strange fact that a lot of the people who grow cotton haven't had money enough to buy cotton goods. They haven't had mattresses to sleep on,

blankets to cover with, or enough clothing to wear. Now, under the new supplemental cotton program, they will get some of these things. Many of the families who plan to benefit from the program are borrowers of the Farm Security Administration - thrifty folk who consider cotton an economy anyway. Right now Farm Security home supervisors, as well as home demonstration agents and representatives of other government agencies and representatives of other government agencies, are busy explaining to people how the program works, and how they can get the most from it.

They are reminding them if they grow cotton, they can grow still less cotton and be paid up to $25---$50 in some cases--- for what they would grow but don't under the new plan. They will receive their payments in cotton stamps which can be used to buy almost any kind of cotton goods - shirts, sheets, dresses, piece goods, and so on. Their cotton stamps will get the same articles that cash would get, and at the same price.

They can use all their stamps at one time, or just one or two at a time till they're gone. They can buy from any store or mail order house selling cotton goods and cooperating in the program....most are cooperating....and can include such things as buttons, bindings, and trimmings with their orders. They must buy only new articles - made entirely of cotton grown and manufactured in the United States - and cannot buy used goods, renovated mattresses, or the like.

The families also are reminded that the whole idea back of the cotton program is simply to reduce the cotton surplus - to get cotton out of bulging warehouses into homes where it is needed, give cotton-tired land a rest and let it grow family gardens and feed crops for a change, to boost our standard of living by putting more cotton goods into bare closets, and on empty linen shelves, and into empty dresser drawers. Besides, the "up-to-$25" a cotton farmer can earn in cotton stamps by growing less cotton, he can also earn an extra $3 in cash by growing more food.

Of course, we couldn't ever tell you all about the program in this short while, so you should ask your home supervisor, home demonstration agent, or the Triple-A chairman in your county if you would like more information. But be sure to ask right away, especially if you'd like to participate.

Suppose you had $25 to spend for cotton goods - all kinds of cotton goods,--cotton dresses, shirts, sheets, pants, overalls, baby clothes, underwear, nightwear, stockings, sox, bedspreads, blankets, pillow cases, dresser scarfs, table runners, curtains, draperies, yard goods, and even articles for hope chests! You'd have plenty of places to spend it, wouldn't you? And you'd want to get your money's worth, or your stamps' worth if you were cooperating in the plan.

Well, the best way to get your money's worth in cotton goods is to know quality when you buy. Good quality is a better buy than cheap quality too, because it lasts longer and stands up better. Look at the label. See what definite facts, or instructions, it gives about the cloth. See if it says "pre-shrunk" or "colorfast" or anything like that. If it says pre-shrunk, it may still shrink some more, and if it says colorfast, it may be tubfast but not sunfast. So be sure you are getting what you want. Don't let words like "finest made" or "best-ever" fool you--they seldom mean a thing. Ask plenty of questions about your readymade goods, and make a test of your yard goods if necessary. Take home a scrap and wash it to see if it shrinks or fades.

Always examine cotton goods for sizing, or "filler". Sizing makes a cloth "feel" better and gives it a good finish, but too much of it deceives you and makes you think you're getting something you're not. If may even cover up defects in manufacturing. Rub a piece of it between your fingers or tear a scrap and see how much powdery dust falls out of it, or wash a piece and see if the water gets milky and the cloth limp and sleazy. Don't get fabrics with yarns and threads that are twisted or crooked and look as if they had been pulled out of place when the cloth

was finished. They may have been overstretched, and will spring right back into their original off-size and shape when washed.

In buying readymades--whether clothing or household goods--be sure to look at the width of seams, the stitching, and reinforcements at places of hard wear. These are marks of good or bad workmanship and count a lot in durability. Be careful about "bargains" and "seconds" which sometimes aren't bargains at all.

After watching for quality in buying cotton goods, you need only take care of it properly..... and it will serve you long and faithfully.

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